

Testimony of Jennifer Hatch, Program Associate  
Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG)

Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

March 15, 2011

Testimony in Support of S.B. 1176, "An Act Concerning Electric Rate Relief"

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of S.B. 1176, An Act Concerning Electric Rate Relief. As families and businesses across the state continue to struggle under high monthly electric bills, we applaud the Committee's efforts to put money back in peoples' pockets and make investments in clean, renewable power that will give consumers a more stable, affordable and efficient energy system over the long-term.

Our first principle in ConnPIRG's Consumer Energy Campaign is to save people money on their monthly electric bills. We support striking the Competitive Transition Assessment charge from consumers' bills, both as a way to reduce energy costs immediately, but also as a signal of a larger commitment to ratepayer-relief. As this charge should have expired last year, we support its removal as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, as a strong first step towards saving consumers money without delay.

With a view to both reducing costs immediately and over the long-term, we support the concept of providing direct ratepayer relief and funding clean, renewable energy projects [lines 74-77]. Due to the importance of these provisions, we respectfully suggest defining the appropriation process of these funds and clearly stating who is to make allocation decisions, how these decisions are to be made, and what requirements are to be met to be eligible for renewable energy project funding.

Lastly, a robust commitment to clean, renewable energy benefits families and businesses, not just the environment. Investing in home-grown, renewable energy is critical to providing Connecticut a long-term hedge against increasing and volatile fossil fuel prices. Producing clean energy locally helps bring down transmission costs, and can grow our local economy by putting people to work in new jobs created. Ensuring the stability and integrity of the Clean Energy Funds is essential to this vision and for the long-term benefit of consumers.

On behalf of ConnPIRG's members, I urge you to help all Connecticut's ratepayers by passing S.B. 1176 to help families and businesses lower their monthly bills and get Connecticut on track for an affordable, efficient energy future.

*Founded by students at UConn in 1973, the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG) now represents thousands of Connecticut consumers. Our mission is to deliver persistent, result-oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters responsive, democratic government.*